Agricultural policies

1337. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE b pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the present agricultural policies need reformulation to ensure proper growth of the rural economy;

(b) whether it is also a fact that 50 per cent of the plan outlay has been reserved for rural development during the last two years; whereas investment in agriculture and allied sector has come down;

(c) if so, the reasons therfor; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to check this trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Public Sector outlay on agriculture and allied sectors has increased in the last two years. Investment in agriculture in absolute terms has also not declined.

(d) Efforts will be made to optimally use the investments already made in the agricultural sector, rather than making fresh starts with huge investments. The main thrust of additional public sector investments will continue to be on development of rainfed farming areas, diversification of agriculture and supportive infrastructure for it, ensuring efficent use of inputs etc. It is also envisaged to encourage private sector investment through institutional financial support.

Facilities to earthquake victims

1338. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of earthquake victims in Uttarkashi and other parts of Garhwal who have been provided with homes and other facilities so far; and

(b) whether Government have received complaints about misappropriation of relief supplies; if so, the action taken by Government against the quality officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) and (b) The information is being collected from the State Government and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

International Goat Conference

1339. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has a large goat population to earn valuable foreign exchange;

(b) whether the International Goat Conference, held in Delhi recently has expressed its unhappiness that enough had not been done to exploit the full potential of the goat; and

(c) if so, what steps Government are taking to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE. (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The formal recommendations of the International Goat Conference have not yet been received.

(c) Government has strengthened the research programmes on goats.

Shortfall in production of foodgrains

1340. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is likelihood of a short-fall in production of foodgrains during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the reasons for this shortfall; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to augment the food production and maintain self-sufficiency in foodgrains?